

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

# Institutional Plan for Adult Learners

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For the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

**Submitted by: Lisa Cox**

**June 1, 2009**

## Financial Aid for Adult Learners

### **A. Please describe current financial aid programs for adult learners.**

EKU uses the following approaches to supporting the costs of attendance for all students. As such adult student benefit from all of the aid programs listed below. For the Academic year 2008-09, 76 % of those students 25 or older received some type of financial aid.

### **Federal Financial Aid**

The **Federal Pell Grant** is a federal entitlement program. It provides free money to students enrolled in an eligible program of study at approved postsecondary institutions in the United States and abroad. This is gift aid which usually does not have to be repaid. You may not receive a Federal Pell or any other grant if you already have a bachelor degree.

The amount of your Federal Pell Grant is based on your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the number of hours for which you are enrolled. For a regular fall/spring term Pell Grant amounts will be adjusted based on enrollment level until the end of the drop/add period for each term.

- A full time student enrolls for twelve or more hours.
- A three-quarter time student enrolls for nine to eleven hours.
- A half-time student enrolls for six to eight hours.
- A less than half-time student enrolls for less than six hours.

The **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)** provides funds for students who have exceptional financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It is gift aid and usually does not have to be repaid.

Eligibility is determined by a federal formula (Federal Methodology) established by Congress. Priority is given to Federal Pell recipients and to "exceptionally" needy students as defined by the U. S. Department of Education.

Eastern Kentucky University participates in the **Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP)**. The FFELP provides incentives and services that benefit our students and parents. Student loans are borrowed money that must be repaid.

**Federal Stafford Subsidized Loans** are based on financial need as well as annual and aggregate loan limits. Interest on this loan does not accrue during eligible periods of enrollment and stated grace periods. The interest rate is capped at 8.25%. Both interest accrual and repayment begins six months after graduation or when a student is no longer enrolled at least half time (6 semester hours for both undergraduate and graduate).

**Federal Stafford Unsubsidized Loans** are based on annual and aggregate loan limits and is not based on financial need. Interest on this loan begins to accrue upon the first disbursement. The interest rate is variable not to exceed 8.25%. Principal repayment begins six months after graduation or when the student is no longer enrolled at least half time (6 semester hours for both undergraduate and graduate).

**Federal Perkins Loans** are federally funded loans that are awarded to students with exceptional financial need. Repayment and accrual of interest at the rate of 5% begin nine months after the student is no longer enrolled at least half time (6 semester hours). The minimum repayment is \$40 per month and repayment may be extended for up to 10 years.

### **State Financial Aid**

The **CAP Grant** is gift assistance which generally does not have to be repaid. The student must demonstrate need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The expected family contribution, as determined by Federal Methodology, must be 4041 or below. The recipients must be a Kentucky resident and be enrolled for at least 6 hours and cannot be enrolled in a program which leads to a degree in theology, divinity or religious education. CAP grants will not pay for correspondence classes.

### **Institutional Scholarships and Grants**

#### **Transfer Scholarships**

**Kentucky Central and Technical College (KCTC) scholarship** is designed for new transfer students from KCTC system. The minimum requirements for this scholarship are 24 college hours earned and a minimum cumulative GPA of a 3.0 from all previous college coursework. In order for a student to apply for this scholarship, the student only needs to complete their admissions application and provide all college transcripts to the Admissions office for consideration. If the student meets the minimum requirements, the student will automatically be awarded this scholarship and will receive an award letter. The award will cover half in-state tuition for six consecutive semesters upon maintaining a cumulative GPA of 2.5. KCTCS scholarship recipients **must be enrolled full time** at ECU to receive this scholarship.

ECU also has a **Transfer Presidential Scholarship** for transfer students admitted from non-KCTCS institutions. These awards are based on prior college or university academic credentials including: GPA, hours earned, and curriculum. Recipients are awarded ½ in-state tuition for up to six semesters. Applicants are required to submit an official transcript from all college or university coursework attempted, two letters of recommendation, and the completed application.

**ECU Regional Scholars** are undergraduate, full-time, first-year, Kentucky resident students who reside in one of the 22 counties located in ECU's primary service region. In accordance with ECU's mission and in order to provide assistance to students from these counties, funding will be provided at the level of the in-state undergraduate tuition cost and will be renewable up to 10 consecutive semesters. For 2007-08, ECU will have an investment of \$2,611/semester and \$5,222/annual.

- **Qualifications:** Graduate from a high school located in one of the 22 identified counties in ECU's primary service region; Must have a Median Household Income of \$30,000 or less; Must have an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) of \$5,000 or less; Must have completed the Kentucky Pre-College Curriculum requirements in high school; Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25; Receive Full Admission status to ECU

- **Requirements:** Must complete a FAFSA; Must maintain a GPA of at least 2.75; Remain a full-time student in good standing with satisfactory academic progress; Maintain required minimum eligibility for all awarded federal, state and institutional grants

**Scholastic Opportunity scholars** are undergraduate, full-time, first-year students whose family income falls at 150% or below the national poverty level. The grant amount will provide the differential between the direct costs of attendance (tuition, room, board, and books) and federal, state and institutional grants. This cost differential is estimated to be \$1,500 and will be renewable up to 10 consecutive semesters. For 2007-08, ECU will have an investment of \$750/semester and \$1,500/annual.

- **Qualifications:** Must be Pell eligible
- **Requirements:** Must complete a FAFSA; Must maintain a GPA of 2.5; Remain a full-time student in good standing with satisfactory academic progress; Maintain required minimum eligibility for all awarded federal, state and institutional grants

The **Cover to Cover program** is aimed at undergraduate, full-time, first-year Kentucky residents. The intent of this program is to provide assistance in obtaining textbooks for those students who will not receive textbook assistance through the Scholastic Opportunity Grant but who have demonstrated financial need. Experience indicates that students with Estimated Family Contributions just above the level for Pell eligibility have difficulty in affording textbooks. These students will be provided the cost of books up to \$400 a semester renewable for up to 10 consecutive semesters. For 2007-08, ECU will have an investment of \$400/semester and \$800/annual.

- **Qualifications:** Demonstrate an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) above 150% of the poverty level and \$5,000 or less
- **Requirements:** Must complete a FAFSA; Remain a full-time student in good standing with satisfactory academic progress; Maintain required minimum eligibility for all awarded federal, state and institutional grants

The **Retention Scholarship** is a fund established to help retain ECU students that have completed their freshman year and have committed to returning to ECU in the fall of the next year. Individual awards will range from \$350.00 to \$1,000.00 per academic year.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Applicants must have entered ECU in either the summer or fall of the current year as first-time freshmen and must be returning the fall of the next year.
- Applicants must have a minimum of a 2.0 cumulative grade point average.
- Applicants must have earned a grade of a "C" or better in all coursework, including developmental courses.
- All applicants must be degree-seeking.

#### **Childcare Allowance**

If you incur expenses for dependent care children or for an elderly/handicapped dependent while you are enrolled, you may be eligible for dependent care expenses. Keep in mind this is

an allowance that is added to your cost of attendance for expenses incurred while in class, the library, etc. This may not increase your aid, it only adds to your cost of education which may allow you to borrow more on a student loan.

### **Computer Allowance**

An adjustment may be made to the budget of a student who needs to purchase a computer and/or computer equipment. Students may receive this adjustment only one time for a maximum of \$1200 while enrolled at ECU. This allowance adds the students' cost of education which might allow them borrow more on a student loan.

### **Professional Judgment**

With the passage of the Higher Education Amendments of 1992, there is now a single need analysis methodology for all Title IV programs including the Federal Pell Grant. This has given the Financial Aid Administrator the authority to use professional judgment for the Pell Grant as well as all other Title IV programs.

The following are conditions for which a student may request an adjustment to their EFC.

1. Death of a parent or the independent student's spouse.
2. Loss of employment by student/spouse/parent (for at least 3 months).
3. Loss of earnings due to disability.
4. Loss of untaxed income and benefits.
5. Separation or divorce of parent or student after application.
6. Loss of dependent student income.
7. One time income (ex. Back year social security payments).

### **Deferred/Flexible Tuition Payment**

Any student who is registered for classes is eligible to participate in ECU's Installment Payment Plan. Items that can be included are tuition, class fees, residence hall, meal plans, parking permits, and professional liability insurance. This installment option allows the student to make payments during the semester. 25% of all current semester eligible charges must be paid by the first installment payment due date. ECU also accepts payment by credit card.

### **Third-Party Billing**

ECU allows students to authorize third-party billing to employers, state agencies, rehabilitation office and the military. ECU has an employee in financial aid designated solely for assistance with the paperwork associated with veteran's benefits.

### **Tuition Reimbursement Partnerships**

ECU works with a number of area employers who provide tuition reimbursement for their employees attending ECU. These include United Parcel Service, Lexmark, Fayette County Police Department, Central Baptist Hospital, and Lincoln/Madison/Whitely School Systems (non-classified employees.)

## **Work Study**

The work program at Eastern Kentucky University has three purposes:

1. It provides employment for eligible students enabling them to earn a portion of their expenses while pursuing a college education.
2. It is a part of the educational process whereby students acquire marketable skills.
3. It provides academically related work experience, which may have vocational value in post college years.

### **Federal Work Study:**

- A Federal needs based work program that determines eligibility through the FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid) application. Students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 hours per academic session.
- Students work 10-20 hours per week.
- Students are paid every two weeks with the earnings paid directly to the student. Wages are never automatically paid towards any outstanding ECU bill.
- Work schedules accommodate class schedules.

### **Institutional Employment:**

- Any full time, undergraduate student that is not eligible for federal work study, may work in the Institutional employment program.
- Students work 10-20 hours per week.
- Students are paid every two weeks with earnings paid directly to the student. Wages are never automatically paid towards any outstanding ECU bill.
- Work schedules accommodate class schedules.

### ***B. Please describe your goals for modifying, expanding, or increasing financial aid for adult learners.***

**Goal 1:** To increase the number of adults who apply for federal and state financial aid by 5% in the AY 2009/10.

**Goal 2:** To increase the number of adults receiving transfer scholarships by 5% in the AY 2009/10.

**Goal 3:** To increase ECU's number of Third-party Billing and Tuition Reimbursement Partnerships.

**Goal 4:** To fund at least \$10,000 in scholarships for adult learners during the 2009-2010 academic year.

**C. Please describe your plans to achieve those goals.**

**Goal 1:** ECU plans to increase the number of adults who apply for and receive federal and state financial aid by:

- Conducting focus groups to determine how adults would like to access information related to financial support.
- Developing a Communication Plan for informing adults about financial support options. This information will be included in recruitment materials specifically targeting adults and outreach to newly admitted adults.
- Developing a financial aid webpage and resources which are adult friendly, tailored to their specific questions and concerns.

**Goal 2:** ECU plans to increase the number of adults receiving transfer scholarships by:

- Conducting focus groups to determine how adult transfer students seek information.
- Developing more focused and intentional marketing and promotion of these opportunities to potential applicants.
- Exploring ways to increase overall transfer enrollment.

**Goal 3:** ECU will increase the number of Third-Party Billing and Tuition Reimbursement Partnerships by:

- Identifying the various community agencies and employers who we currently partner with to form a baseline.
- Enhancing current relationships in order to gain additional referrals from Voc Rehab, Unemployment Office, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) office, Veteran's Affairs and various social service agencies.
- Forming connections with area employers who are currently participating in third party billing or tuition reimbursement to foster additional referrals and determine the benefits gained by the employer.
- Promoting these opportunities for employee development and education to professional organizations such as the area Chamber of Commerce.

**Goal 4:** ECU will fund at least \$10,000 in scholarships for adult learners during the 2009-2010 academic year by:

- Conducting focus groups to determine the characteristics of adult learners interested in scholarships.
- Forming a scholarship committee and establish criteria for awards based on finding from the focus groups and the ALFI.
- Utilizing the Lumina funds awarded through the Council on Postsecondary Education to finance this initiative.

**2. Flexible Academic Programming**

**A. Please describe your current flexible academic programming options for adult learners.**

Adults need flexible course delivery and degree completion options because of work and family obligations. ECU offers flexible course delivery options such as **online learning** opportunities (40 plus departments), **evening** (over 80 departments) and occasional **weekend** classes.

Eastern Kentucky University offers two fully online programs as flexible degree completion options. The Department of **Correctional & Juvenile Justice Studies** offers online programs to fit all educational and career goals. It is designed for those interested in entering the challenging and rewarding fields of adult corrections or juvenile justice; or for seasoned professionals looking to advance their knowledge and consequently their career opportunities. The **Fire & Safety Engineering Technology** distance learning programs are designed and delivered to give students the instruction and support necessary to succeed and complete their degree online. Student in the program will have unprecedented academic, technical and administrative support and resources from ECU's staff. ECU's Fire & Safety Engineering Technology program allows students to choose from two concentrations: Fire Administration and Fire Protection Engineering.

The **Bachelor of Arts in General Studies**, which can be awarded through any of our five colleges, is another extremely flexible degree completion option. The General Studies degree program is designed for students intending to complete a baccalaureate degree whose educational objectives are not aligned with a more traditional degree program. The Bachelor of General Studies degree is intended to establish the foundation for a lifetime of continual learning and offers flexibly scheduled highly individualized curricula. Through individualized advising, the program helps students define their educational goals and design interdisciplinary curricula drawing on a variety of course offerings. The program is also intended to allow a student who has completed most of the requirements of a major but has not yet completed the major of an approved program to complete a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner. Transfer credits from technical programs will apply to this degree; however they may not apply to other degree programs at the University.

The following are required for students seeking a General Studies degree:

- Students must have 18 hours within an individual college outside of and in addition to General Education requirements to receive their General Studies degree.
- Any courses ordinarily accepted for credit by Eastern Kentucky University may be chosen as hours to apply to the 120 hours required for graduation.
- Students seeking a General Studies degree must have 60 credits from a regionally accredited institution which may include completion of an AA, AS, or AAS degree.
- Students pursuing a General Studies degree are not permitted to declare a double major, minor, or concentration.
- Students will be considered a member of the College in which they have their 18 hour major requirement.

**Major Requirements.....18 hours**

Courses must be within an individual college and exclusive of general education requirements.

**General Education Requirements.....48 hours**

Standard General Education program.

**University Requirement.....1 hour**



GSO 100.

**Free Electives.....53 hours**

**Total Curriculum Requirements.....120 hours**

***B. Please describe your goals for modifying, expanding, or increasing flexible academic programming options for adult learners.***

**Goal 1:** To increase the number and variety of online course offerings available to adult learners.

**Goal 2:** To complete the approval process for the Associate of General Studies to be effective Fall 2009.

**Goal 3:** To promote the opportunity for academic programs to chose to reduce the number of hours for degree completion from 128 to 120.

***C. Please describe your plans to achieve those goals.***

**Goal 1:** ECU will increase the number and variety of online course offerings available to adult learners by:

- Working with departments and individual faculty who currently offer online courses to hold a specified number of seats in online courses for adult learners.
- Utilizing the Office of Instructional Design and the Teaching and Learning Center to offer and promote opportunities for professional development and support to faculty interested in teaching online.

**Goal 2:** ECU will complete the process for the Associate of General Studies approval in order to be effective during the 2009/10 AY.

- The Associate in General Studies degree which provides students, especially adult learners, the opportunity to pursue a flexible degree program to meet their unique interests, career goals, and academic needs, and serves as a pathway to a four-year degree has passed the Council on Academic Affairs.
- Waiting for it to receive final approval at the Council on Postsecondary Education.

**Goal 3:** Departments will promote the opportunity for students to opt for academic programs which have recently chosen to reduce the number of hours for degree completion from 128 to 120.

- Define process for students wanting to change to new requirements.
- Communicate the opportunities and process to eligible students.

### **3. Credit for Prior Learning**

***A. Please describe your current credit for prior learning policy and provide any data you have on the use of this policy (e.g. How many students earn credit for prior***

***learning each semester? What is the average number of credits earned through credit for prior learning?)***

### **Credit-by-Exam**

Credit-by-exam incorporates several types of programs: the **CLEP® (College-Level Examination Program)**, the **DSST (formerly known as DANTES)**, ECU's **Departmental tests**, and other nationally recognized credit-by-exam testing programs. These testing programs are designed to help students demonstrate competence attained through educational experience other than university instruction. Eastern Kentucky University students may attempt to earn academic credit-by-examination in certain undergraduate courses

**CLEP®** examination results are scored by the Educational Testing Service, and the reports are then forwarded to ECU. The department chair determines whether or not the student has passed the examination based upon his/her performance.

The **DSST** program is an extensive series of 37 examinations in college subject areas that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate courses. ACE recommends 3 semester hours of credit per test. DANTES funds paper-based DSST testing for eligible Service members and civilian examinees at DANTES Test Centers and at national test centers (colleges and universities) offering the Internet-based (iBT) DSSTs.

**Departmental examinations** are scored by personnel in the Academic Testing office if the test is designated for machine scoring. If the test is not designated for machine scoring, the grading is done by the chair of the department offering the course which is being attempted for credit or someone designated by the chair. Whether the student has passed or failed the examination is determined by the chair of the department. The chair of the department offering the course reports to the Office of Academic Testing that the student has passed or failed the examination or provides the Office of Academic Testing with the appropriate score information to determine and report the examination results of machine scored tests.

The Office of Academic Testing provides score report information to the student, his/her academic advisor, and the registrar. Credit earned by examination is recorded without a letter grade; hence, it has no effect upon the student's overall grade point average (GPA).

Based on data beginning with AY 2004/05, **an average of 65 students** earn credit for prior learning via one of the above methods. We do not currently have data on the average number of credit hours earned.

### **Military Credit**

Students may receive Military Science and Leadership course credit for having completed Basic Training (BT) and Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Students may earn up to nine hours of credit. Based upon recommendation of the American Council on Education (ACE), ECU will award credit to individuals who have successfully completed military service school courses, as well as award credit for Military Occupational Specialties (MOS's). Based on data beginning with the 2002/03 AY at least **100 students received military credit** each academic year.

***B. Please describe your goals for modifying, expanding, or increasing credit for prior learning options for adult learners.***

**Goal 1:** To gather data to investigate the impact credit for prior learning has on student retention and graduation.

**Goal 2:** To explore the potential for expanding PLA credit into the areas such as ACE evaluated corporate training credit and portfolio assessment.

***C. Please describe your plans to achieve those goals.***

**Goal 1:** Gather data to investigate the impact credit for prior learning has on student retention and graduations by:

- Participating in the CAEL Prior learning Assessment (PLA) Study in order to examine the relationship between individual student outcomes (such as degree completion, time to degree and persistence) and PLA credit-earning.
- Sharing these findings with institutional members in order to gain more interest and support for credit for prior learning.

**Goal 2:** Explore the potential for expanding PLA credit into other areas such as ACE evaluated corporate training credit and portfolio assessment by:

- Monitoring progress of current collaboration between the College of Justice and Safety and continuing Education and Outreach regarding having several of the OSHA training programs offered at Ft. Rucker, AL, accepted by the University under the Credit for Prior Learning umbrella.
- Promoting the participation of faculty and staff in training related to awarding credit via portfolio assessment.

#### **4. Campus Climate**

***A. Please describe your current campus climate as it relates to adult learners? Are adult learners considered a priority on campus? Do all departments and units focus on the needs of adult learners?***

EKU institutional research defines adult learners as **age 25 and above**, meaning approximately **23% of our undergraduate population** meet this criterion. Adult learners are becoming more of a priority on campus as a result of the Council's support and the realization that ECU will need to become more intentional with this market if we are to meet our 2020 goals. We have a several different adult student organizations or programs focused on meeting the needs of various adult learners. Departments and units across campus are variable in their focus on the needs of adult learners.

## **Adult Focused Programs**

The **Older Wiser Learners (OWLS)** is a place for re-entry (non-traditional) students to belong. The OWLS Lounge is centrally located on the ground floor of the student center. The purpose of OWLS at ECU is to offer an association to meet the needs of the re-entry student in a way that will enhance their college career and expand their college experience. OWLS also spans across categories as a Registered Student Organization (RSO). The OWLS change to fit the ever-changing needs of the re-entry/non-traditional student.

- Provide members with information pertaining to needed support services and academic services at the university, local, and state levels.
- Ensure members a voice in campus politics, student rights, and encourage participation in campus student programs.
- Increase communication between members and the ECU administration.
- Encourage and support members in all academic endeavors.
- Establish a supportive and cohesive group of re-entry (non-traditional) learner through a variety of extra-curricular activities.

OWL'S definition of an adult student- Any student who faces multiple challenges in obtaining his/her higher education, such as:

- Married
- Divorced/widowed
- Parent
- 25, or older
- Veteran or active duty military
- Returning to school after more than two years

The **Education Pays Center (EPC)** is a Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services funded program (Kentucky Works Program) and serves Kentucky Temporary Assistance Program (KTAP) recipients who are seeking postsecondary education at Eastern Kentucky University. EPC is set up to serve a minimum of **fifty adult students** per academic year.

The goals of EPC are to effectively facilitate useful career exploration, counseling and guidance activities to assist students in setting and obtaining educational, career and personal goals. The program provides work readiness training and employment opportunities that will help students acquire necessary employment skills and learn the established standards of professional conduct while meeting the work requirements of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

EPC also provides academic support and retention services that help students remain in school, raise their GPA and graduate. In addition, students are provided personal support and counseling services that promote individual self-esteem, confidence and initiative that will assist the student to effectively manage the activities of daily living and cope with the challenges of adjusting to the ever changing world of work and life circumstances.

To qualify for the EPC program, students must be current KTAP recipients, maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average, and remain at full-time enrollment status. Beyond these academic expectations, participants are also required to participate in program workshops and group events. Students are also required to maintain contact with EPC staff on a regular basis, complete any needed paperwork requested by the program, and adhere to handbook guidelines.

The **Office of Academic Skills** offers or has offered to adult students include:

- Academic mentoring and advising, offered to nontraditional students who are accepted to the University as special condition admits. ECU has served approximately ten such students since AY 2006-07.
- Since the Academic Skills unit was developed during the 2006-07 academic year, we have offered three workshops designed specifically for adult learners. These have included: Stumbling Blocks to Stepping Stones: Overcoming Barriers to Academic Success (14 participants), EBSCO Host Database Training for Non-Traditional Students (10 participants), College Knowledge for Adult Learners (12 participants), Writing the College Essay in Five Easy Steps (9 participants), Academic Skills Learning Lunch: On and Off Campus Resources for Non-Traditional Students (10 participants)

***B. Please describe your goals for changing your campus climate to better meet the needs of adult learners.***

**Goal 1:** To designate a specific point of contact for adult learners and other non-traditional populations.

**Goal 2:** To develop a social networking group for adult learners and other non-traditional populations.

**Goal 3:** To partner with OWL's non-traditional student organization to provide campus tours to interested adult learners.

**Goal 4:** To provide additional workshops and informational sessions to

***C. Please describe your plans to achieve those goals.***

**Goal 1:** A point of contact for adult learners and other non-traditional populations will be determined by:

- Submitting a proposal for a Student Outreach and Transitions Office (SOTO) designed to serve the above-mentioned populations.

**Purpose:** SOTO will serve as a one-stop shop for a variety of needs. Prospective students can receive individualized consulting services in the areas of admissions, degree audits, major selection, academic bankruptcy, credit transfer process, degree completion via distance learning, and course registration prior to their first semester. The office will also strive to have answers to basic questions regarding filing for financial aid, financial aid appeals, professional

judgment, securing veterans' benefits, receiving credit for prior learning and paying off outstanding balances with the institution. This area will provide comprehensive support to students from initial inquiry on through to registration for their first semester of classes and serve as an advocate to promote their needs.

**Populations served:** The target populations include veterans, re-entry students (away from ECU for 2 plus years), and students 25 and older (including transfers and those coming from our extended campuses), with other select groups added as identified.

## **Organizational Structure**

**Director Student Outreach and Transition Office (SOTO)** - the Director will be responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the office, including budgeting and supervision of personnel, while ensuring a high degree of quality and consistency of services to the targeted populations. The director will also be responsible for seeking and overseeing grant opportunities offered by the CPE and other agencies as appropriate. This individual will develop and maintain strong collaborative relationships within the institution and with agencies within the service region.

**Academic Administrative Specialist-** The AAS will assist the director with the daily operations of the office, including administrative support and frontline customer service. The AAS will be trained to answer a wide range of questions about SOTO and its services and make appropriate referrals. In addition, this individual will provide direct administrative support to the Director and be responsible for maintaining a database and files on all students served through SOTO.

**Goal 2:** To develop a social networking group for adult learners and other non-traditional populations.

- SOTO would be responsible for developing and maintaining the feature.

**Goal 3:** To partner with OWL's non-traditional student organization to provide campus tours to interested adult learners.

- Contact president of the OWL's organization.
- Secure volunteers willing to serve as ambassadors to new and prospective adult students.
- Schedule times for the prospective or newly admitted students to visit campus for a tour.

## **5. Other Issues Related to Adult Learners**

**A. Please describe any other opportunities or needs identified through the ALFI Toolkit that your institution would like to address.**

**ALFI Principle: Strategic Partnerships-** The degree to which the institution engages in strategic relationships, partnerships and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners. Results indicated that ECU is not performing well on this principle.

**ALFI Principle: Life and Career Planning-** The degree to which the institution addresses adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals. Results indicated ECU had room

for much growth in this area, with the institution and students each ranking performance in this area low in comparison with the benchmark institutions. CAEL

***B. Please describe your goals for addressing those opportunities or needs.***

**Goal 1:** To form an adult learner committee to investigate and make recommendations related to the areas financial assistance, credit for prior learning, flexible academic programming, campus climate and strategic partnerships.

**Goal 2:** To identify employers or other organizations which are interested in collaborating to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners.

**Goal 3:** To develop and implement a plan for addressing adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment and provide career development resources to help adult learners reach their goals.

***C. Please describe your plans to achieve those goals.***

**Goal 1:** ECU plans to form an adult learner workgroup to investigate and make recommendations related to the areas financial assistance, credit for prior learning, flexible academic programming, campus climate and strategic partnerships.

- Identifying individuals from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and Financial Affairs, who are committed to promoting the needs of adult learners.
- Inviting at least 2 adult students to join the workgroup.
- Scheduling monthly meeting to discuss the progress towards the institutional plan.
- The workgroup will also be responsible for scheduling and conducting focus groups in order to gain additional information about the adult learner needs identified through the ALFI.
- Making work assignments as necessary to assist in meeting the goals of the institutional plan to support adult learners.

**Goal 2:** ECU will identify employers or other organizations which are interested in collaborating to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners by:

- Connecting with agencies and employers who currently collaborate through tuition reimbursement and third-party billing to develop a venue for additional recruitment and referral opportunities.
- Networking with existing ECU outreach programs, our regional campuses and the area Chamber of Commerce to identify additional community partners interested in improving educational opportunities for adult learners.

**Goal 3:** A plan for addressing adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment will be developed and career development resources will be provided. This will be accomplished by:

- Forming a partnership between the offices of Student Outreach and Transition and Career Services.
- Reviewing and selecting career interest and career development instruments.

- Piloting interpretation of instruments using both individual and group career coaching.